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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000962

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SUBJECT: RUBERWA STILL IN OFFICE, AND LOOKING TOWARD
CAMPAIGNING

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reason 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) In a wide-ranging private discussion at his residence June 11, Vice President Azarias Ruberwa told the Ambassador that recent RCD-Goma party meetings had proven difficult for him. The sessions had been called because of internal RCD-Goma rules that office-holders should have a tenure of no more than two years. Ruberwa reported that his own position as RCD-Goma President, expiring under this provision June 30, had been subject to long and intense discussion. Ruberwa said it had been a difficult exercise for him, although in the end he was reconfirmed as party president.

¶2. (C) Looking ahead, Ruberwa noted that finances will prove to be a major problem for RCD-Goma to provide for adequate election campaigning. While President Kabila, s PPRD and Jean-Pierre Bemba, s MLC have considerable resources to draw on, including de facto state funds, RCD-Goma will have problems. Ruberwa said they are looking around for sources of support, including any U.S. individuals or groups willing to provide support. The Ambassador reaffirmed that the USG and USG-financed groups do not provide campaign finance or other partisan support to individual candidates or parties.

¶3. (C) Ruberwa also noted that both President Kabila and Vice President Bemba had supported an earlier text of the new draft Constitution giving, in his view, too much power to the Presidency. (Note: The text was modified before final adoption, providing for greater checks and balances within the overall government structure. End note.) Both Kabila and Bemba favored a strong Presidency, Ruberwa observed, because they both are convinced they can win.

¶4. (C) Comment: The Ruberwa comments certainly suggest that he intends to be a Presidential candidate in coming elections, but his separate observations about the draft constitution indicate that he has no illusions about his ability to win. Rather, his own candidacy would presumably be to advance overall RCD-Goma interests and help build support and protection for RCD interests in the post-election government. Ruberwa also spoke about the need for political coalitions, further providing some sense of his and RCD-Goma thinking regarding elections. Ruberwa, s points about the inequalities set up by the disparities in financial resources by various candidates are well-founded, albeit without any obvious solutions. At least, however, his comments are further evidence that a good part of the DRC political class is thinking in terms of electoral politics, a welcome trend. End comment.

MEECE